Original Paper

Utilizing a Three-Step technique to Incorporate Video Song Clips for Teaching English Vocabulary to EFL Students

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Abstract

This paper presents a study that employed video song clips as an instructional tool for imparting English vocabulary to Taiwanese EFL university freshmen. The research incorporated three well-known songs performed by renowned artists, which were readily available on YouTube. A pretest-posttest control-group design was employed, wherein the treatment group (consisting of 28 participants) received English conversation lessons accompanied, in part, by English songs, while the control group (comprising 25 individuals) underwent conventional teaching methods devoid of video clips. The study spanned three consecutive regular sessions, with approximately the final 25 minutes of each session dedicated to this experimental approach. Both groups were subjected to a 30-item English vocabulary assessment created by the researcher, encompassing words drawn from the song lyrics, both before and after the instructional intervention. A statistical independent samples T-test was employed to analyze the data, revealing a significant increase in scores for the treatment group. This paper suggests a three-step methodology for utilizing video song clips, which can be conveniently implemented to assist EFL students in enhancing their repertoire of English vocabulary.

Keywords

EFL, songs, video, vocabulary

1. Introduction

We might postulate that being exposed to a language plays a crucial role in achieving success in acquiring a second or foreign language. This is especially evident when it comes to building a strong vocabulary. Learners are likely to become more proficient in words that are commonly used in the language as opposed to those that are rarely encountered. Hence, it is advisable for learners not to confine their language learning to the classroom alone. Instead, they should enhance their exposure to English by engaging with popular forms of media such as English songs. Using English songs in EFL

classes can be incredibly beneficial for language learners. Songs provide an engaging and enjoyable way to improve listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and even grammar. Also, Songs can be integrated into various subjects, promoting interdisciplinary learning and reinforcing language skills in other areas such as history, science, or social studies. Similarly, songs can cater to diverse learning styles, accommodating auditory learners who grasp information better through listening and music. Songs also expose students to authentic, colloquial language and various accents, helping them adapt to real-world conversations. Additionally, the repetitive nature of song lyrics aids in memorization and reinforces language structures. Songs can as well be a gateway to cultural insights, fostering a deeper appreciation for English-speaking cultures. Through songs, students can explore English as a global language, understanding its significance and impact worldwide. By incorporating English songs, educators can create a dynamic and immersive learning experience, enhancing students' language skills while fostering a love for the language and its cultural richness. Overall, incorporating English songs into EFL lessons not only enhances language skills but also makes learning English a fun and memorable experience.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Applying Music and Songs in Pedagogy

Music has the potential to exert a positive influence both verbally and non-verbally, contributing to heightened psycho-physiological stimulation and mood enhancement (Cassidy & MacDonald, 2007; Jones, West, & Estell, 2006; Schellenberg, 2006). Several cognitive neuroscience studies also propose that music significantly impacts linguistic memory, thereby enhancing language-related tasks. This effect might be attributed to the rhythmic aspect of the song, which enhances the effectiveness of neural firing patterns (Jentschke, Koelsch, & Friederici, 2005; Patel, 2008; Sammler et al., 2010; Thaut et al., 2008). According to Wallace (1994), employing songs featuring simple patterns can enhance the retention of textual information in the learners' native language. It is no mystery that pleasurable repetition of language sounds and patterns via songs can motivate students to engage with L2 material beyond the classroom setting (Murphey, 1990). Likewise, According to Brand and Li (2009) ESL teachers worldwide express their enthusiasm for how music and related song lyrics have significantly contributed to their students' education in music. According to Millington (2011) songs can be used for several purposes and that there are many reasons why songs can be considered a precious pedagogical means.

2.2 Possible Explanations for the Efficiency of Video Song Clips

Borchgrevink (1982) claimed that linguistic and musical elements are processed in different hemispheres of the brain, suggesting that simultaneous presentation of language and music can offer an effective pedagogical approach for facilitating learning. Numerous experiments and investigations have yielded results indicating that music and songs can elicit positive emotions and enhance learning outcomes for language learners (Lozanov & Gateva, 1989; Spicher & Sweeney, 2007; Ting, 2002).

Similarly, Besson, Chobert, and Marie (2011) argue that music and language likely share a common origin and primary function, which is to express emotions.

We might also postulate that video song clips could potentially enhance language learning efficiency, and this hypothesis aligns with the principles elucidated in dual coding theory by Paivio (1971). Several pieces of neurobiological evidence corroborate the tenets of this theory, which assumes that the human brain maintains functionally distinct systems for processing verbal and nonverbal information. In essence, different regions of the brain specialize in the processing of verbal and nonverbal data. As per Paivio (1971), emotional and affective responses are expected to accompany nonverbal cognitive reactions, such as mental imagery. Put in more technical terms, dual coding theory posits that mental representation is structured into two distinct coding systems—one specialized for language and the other for nonverbal objects and events (Paivio & Begg, 1981).

2.3 Related Studies

Aguirre, Bustinza, and Garvich (2016) conducted a study on the incorporation of music into the language class syllabus, finding that students displayed greater motivation to participate in class activities when songs were integrated into their English lessons. Additionally, a study investigating the effects of using karaoke to learn Japanese vocabulary among Taiwanese university students, conducted by Shirban Sasi and Haga (2019), revealed significant improvement in female learners specifically. Additionally, Legg's (2009) research revealed that the use of music in educational settings improved memory for L2 materials in comparison to classes without music. Similarly, Thiessen and Saffran (2009) observed that infants displayed superior recall of lyrics when they were paired with a melody as opposed to when they were presented solely in spoken form. Studies like Bisson et al. (2013) have demonstrated that accidental encounters with foreign language words, particularly when presented in multiple sensory formats, notably increase the chances of these words being effectively learned during later intentional instruction. Music can be a highly effective tool for language acquisition, whether it is used in educational settings or as part of self-directed learning. Studies such as works of Kolinsky et al. (2009), and Al-efeshat and Baniabdelrahman (2020) have demonstrated that music can enhance the understanding of spoken language. Their findings indicate that when language is combined with a musical melody, it can be more readily broken down into distinct parts, making it easier to grasp and comprehend. According to Purcell (1992) and Aquil (2012), teachers should consider the language used in song lyrics and whether it is suitable for their students. They should also consider how many words students need to understand in order to comprehend English songs effectively when using them as teaching tools. Furthermore, it is important to understand the vocabulary makeup of songs and how it can enhance vocabulary learning. Lastly, teachers should weigh the vocabulary load and overall lexical characteristics of song lyrics against those of other authentic language materials like novels, TV shows, or movies when deciding which to use in their teaching.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

A pre-test post-test control-group design based on Creswell (2003, p170) was conducted for the current study. The details are as follow:

• The experimental group A and the control group B were randomly assigned.

• Both groups took a pre-test and post-test vocabulary test developed based on the English video songs.

• The experimental group received the main treatment (learning vocabulary helped by the video songs).

• The control group received a different teaching method (learning vocabulary through conventional techniques).

3.2 Participants

A total of 53 students participated in this study. They were Taiwanese EFL university freshmen who were in two classes. The two classes were randomly assigned to Class A (Treatment group, N=28), and Class B (Control group, N=25).

3.3 Research Instrument

The author created a 30-question multiple-choice English vocabulary test (Appendix). Even though all the words were taught in both the treatment and control groups, the questions were deliberately made as challenging as possible in order to ensure discriminating power of each test item. Two experts reviewed the test for content validity, and it was piloted with a similar group to check for the reliability. The test was given to both groups a week before and after the experiment. Only correct answers were used for analysis; unanswered or wrong responses were not considered.

3.4 Research Question and Hypothesis

Considering the primary aim of this research, which was to investigate potential impacts of incorporating English video song clips to improve the learning of English vocabulary, the study formulated the following research question and its corresponding null hypothesis:

Is there any significant difference in English vocabulary gain score between the students who were taught the vocabulary through English video song clips, and those who were taught the vocabulary through other conventional teaching techniques?

3.5 The Procedure

The overall 3-step technique procedure proposed in this paper is as follows:

Before applying the technique, we must find a suitable English video song clip (preferably on YouTube) with interesting and challenging lyrics, considering the proficiency level of language learners and their musical preferences. The songs chosen for the current study were, 1) "Desert Rese" by STING & Cheb Mami; 2) "The Lady in Red" by Chris De Burgh; and 3) "The Caravanserai" by Lorena Mc Kenneth.

Step 1: Determine which elements of the song will be the focus of the lesson and create a brief overview of the singer and the musical style. Ask students to focus well, and then play the live recorded video clip once or twice. Ask students if they have grasped any English words at all. Usually, when we watch live clips, we cannot understand the lyrics that much. This might be due to the visual effects

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which most probably dominate the overall clip. So, teachers might not expect their students to have recognized a big number of words- if any at all- at this phase, though the experience of listening to and watching a live video song is quite exhilarating. In a way, this creates the information gap (or let us call it the urge to know the words) which can be fulfilled in the following phases.

Step2: Now play the same song in a clip which is not a live performance record. This time, since the distracting visual elements are removed, we expect the students to recognize more English words. Do this again once or twice. Afterwards, enquire the learners about the words they could perceive.

Step 3: Now ask the language learners to focus again and watch the same song either in a lyric video record, or a song video with accurate English subtitles. If this format is not available on the Internet, the teacher can just prepare the lyrics in advance and show them to the students in sync with the song by using any convenient software program like Word, PowerPoint, etc.

Typically, each stage might last around seven to eight minutes, resulting in a total duration of approximately 25 minutes for the entire process.

4. Results

Since we used independent samples t-test as the statistical tool in the current study, the three assumptions of "independence of observations", "scores distribution normality", and "homogeneity of the variances" needed to be met. As already stated before, the treatment and the control groups were randomly assigned. Also, the two groups had no idea as to what teaching material was applied in the other group. Thus, the independence of observations has been observed in this study.

Then as for the normality of the distribution of the scores in the population in this study, we need to see the descriptive statistics results as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Results for the Two Groups

Groups		Statistic	Std. Error
Gain scores	Mean	1.47	.069
	Median	1.00	
	Variance	.254	
	Std. Deviation	.504	
	Skewness	.117	.327
	Kurtosis	-2.06	.644

Table 1 shows that in the analysis the mean is very close to the median. We can also look at the skewness and kurtosis statistics. Here, we can see that the skewness and kurtosis values are small relative to the standard errors. Thus, the skewness and kurtosis of the distributions are not problematic here suggesting

that the distributions of the gain scores are normal. Then, to check if the assumption of homogeneity of the variances has been satisfied, we need to examine the outcomes of the independent samples t-test as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-Test for the Gain Scores

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
| | | | | | Sig. (2-tailed) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
	F	Sig.	t	df		Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.514	.067	2.625	51	.011	.27059	2.02941
Equal variances not assumed			2.681	47.924	.010	.28742	2.01258

In Table 2, the significance value of the Levene's Test is .067 which is larger than .05. This means that the assumption of homogeneity of the variances of the scores for the population has been met. Thus, we should use the first line in the table, which refers to "equal variances assumed". Therefore, in the present analysis we are dealing with the following results: Groups: t (53) = 2.625, *p*=.011

As the *p*=.011 is smaller than the required cut-off value of .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and, thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the English vocabulary gain score between the control and the treatment groups.

After examining the hypothesis, it is necessary to evaluate the effect size statistics, which offers insight into the extent of differences between the two groups. One common method is calculating Eta Squared, although SPSS does not offer Eta Squared values for t-tests. Therefore, we need to perform these computations ourselves based on the information available in the output. The process for calculating and interpreting Eta Squared is outlined by Pallant (2005) using the following formula:

$$Eta\ Squared = \frac{t^2}{t^2+(N-1)} = \frac{(2.625)^2}{(2.625)^2+(53-1)} = 0.117$$

As per Cohen's (1988) criteria, interpreting this value involves considering it as follows: a value of 0.01 indicates a small effect, 0.06 suggests a moderate effect, and 0.14 signifies a large effect. In this case, the effect size of 0.117 falls between moderate and large effect. When multiplied by 100, this value translates to a percentage. Hence, in this study, roughly 12 percent of the variation in English vocabulary gain score can be attributed to the differences in the two teaching methods used.

5. Discussion

The findings in the current study support the claims and findings of Cassidy and MacDonald (2007), Jentschke, Koelsch, and Friederici (2005), Jones, West, and Estell (2006), Patel (2008), Sammler et al. (2010), and Schellenberg (2006) in that usage of music can be beneficial to the enhancement of teaching and learning. The findings of the present paper are also in tandem with Borchgrevink (1982)'s claim in that simultaneous presentation of language and music can offer an effective pedagogical approach for facilitating learning. Additionally, the author suggests that the enhancement in learning could be attributed to Paivio's dual coding theory, which asserts that information presented both verbally and visually is likely to be more memorable compared to material presented in only one form. This effect of memory improvement supports Legg's findings (2009). The present study, however, does not provide conclusive evidence either supporting or contradicting the findings of Al-efeshat and Baniabdelrahman (2020), who suggested that music has the potential to improve the comprehension of spoken language. The results of their study imply that when language is paired with a musical melody, it can be deconstructed into clear components, making it more accessible and understandable. Moreover, the author recognizes that the findings in this paper are not definitive due to various limitations. These constraints include a small sample size, a brief project duration, and the use of a limited number of video song clips in the experiment. It is important to note that the study did not aim to explore students' individual preferences regarding specific types of video song clips. The outcomes should be interpreted with caution given these limitations, which affect the overall robustness and generalizability of the results.

6. Conclusion

The present study delved into the multifaceted realm of integrating English video songs into language education as a useful tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition. A 3-step technique as to how to utilize English video song clips has been proposed. The research findings underscore the inherent motivational appeal of music and its ability to captivate learners, fostering an engaging and immersive environment. The use of English video songs not only stimulates students' interest, but also offers a dynamic platform for language educators to introduce diverse vocabulary in context. Furthermore, the current study emphasizes the adaptability of this approach across various age groups and proficiency levels. Whether in traditional classroom settings or digital learning platforms, English video songs have showcased their effectiveness in accommodating different learning styles and preferences. The integration of multimedia resources enhances the pedagogical landscape, allowing educators to cater to the needs of a diverse student body. In the pursuit of effective pedagogical methods, it is hoped that this study serves as a catalyst for further exploration and experimentation.

7. Recommendations for Further Research

Here are some recommendations for potential future studies:

•   Exploring how cultural elements in English video songs may contribute to vocabulary learning, including idiomatic expressions, and slangs.

•   Studying how the use of popular English songs may enhance students' motivation and engagement in language learning.

•   Examining the possibility of using interactive multimedia platforms and online resources that incorporate English video songs to teach vocabulary.

•   Comparing the complexity of lyrics in English songs and their suitability for different learning levels and teaching objectives.

•   Conducting surveys or interviews to understand students' preferences regarding specific genres or artists and how these preferences impact their vocabulary learning experience.

•   Investigating effective strategies and techniques used by EFL/ESL teachers to incorporate English video songs in the classroom for teaching vocabulary.

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Appendix: The Vocabulary Test

Instructions: Read each of the following questions carefully and fill in the blank with the most appropriate answer given.

1. The sunset painted a _____ picture over the horizon.

    a) lovely   b) amazing   c) romance   d) later

2. The movie's _____ storyline captivated the audience from start to finish.

    a) hardly   b) childish   c) amazing   d) utter

3. Despite her _____ intelligence, she remained humble and unassuming.

    a) lovely   b) gorgeous   c) amazing   d) highlights

4. The artist's use of colors and textures created _____ in every corner of the painting.

   a) lovely   b) highlights   c) romance   d) amazing

5. He could _____ believe the incredible sights he witnessed during his travels.

   a) hardly   b) harder   c) romance   d) amazing

6. The professor's lectures were an _____ display of knowledge and expertise.

   a) lovely   b) utter   c) highlights   d) gorgeous

7. The sudden _____ lit up the night sky.

   a) lightning   b) shimmering   c) gentle   d) eastern

8. The concept of _____ often perplexes philosophers, as it implies time without end.

   a) eternity   b) onward   c) yearning   d) shadows

9. The water in the lake was so clear that the fish appeared to be _____ beneath the surface.

   a) searing   b) reside   c) shimmering   d) bridle

10. The journey into the _____ forest was an adventure of a lifetime.

    a) mighty   b) gently   c) torture   d) desire

11. She couldn't help but feel a deep _____ for the places she had never been.

    a) longing   b) veil   c) logic   d) haunt

12. His _____ stare made her feel uncomfortable and self-conscious.

    a) gaze   b) promise   c) intoxication   d) lightning

13.   The _____ aroma of the flowers filled the entire garden.

       a) perfume   b) flames   c) shadows   d) eastern

14.   The _____ wind carried the scent of the sea.

       a) onward   b) tortured   c) yearning   d) mighty

15.   The teacher's strict _____ on classroom behavior left no room for disruptions.

       a) bridle   b) shimmering   c) haunt   d) desert

16.   The constant noise in the city was a stark contrast to the _____ countryside.

       a) veiled   b) reside   c) logic   d) gentle

17.   The _____ of a lost love continued to haunt her dreams.

       a) water   b) flames   c) promise   d) needs

18.   The clouds covering the sun cast long _____ on the sand.

       a) eastern   b) lightning   c) onward   d) shadows

19.   The old mansion was said to be _____ by the spirits of those who had died there.

       a) haunted   b) bridle   c) veiled   d) intoxicated

20.   His _____ for adventure led him to explore remote and dangerous places.

       a) desire   b) gaze   c) promise   d) flames

21.   The _____ of the waves crashing against the shore was both soothing and mesmerizing.

       a) gentle   b) tortured   c) perfume   d) shadows

22. The _____ of his arguments was difficult to refute.

    a) logic   b) longing   c) shimmering   d) reside

23. She wore a _____ over her face as she walked down the aisle.

    a) veil   b) yearning   c) searing   d) haunt

24. His _____ to always tell the truth was unwavering.

    a) promise   b) onward   c) eastern   d) intoxication

25. The _____ love story between the two characters left the audience in tears.

    a) romance   b) lightning   c) shimmering   d) flames

26. The dark memories of his past mistakes _____ him.

    a) haunted   b) gentle   c) promise   d) shadows

27. The _____ of the roses in the garden filled the air with a sweet scent.

    a) perfume   b) desire   c) bridle   d) might

28. She felt a deep, strange _____ as she watched the sun set over the ocean.

    a) intoxication   b) onward   c) yearning   d) shadows

29. The _____ in his eyes revealed his deep affection for her.

    a) shimmering   b) reside   c) eastern   d) logic

30. The mysterious sounds in the old house continued to _____ her dreams.

    a) haunt   b) promise   c) flames   d) gaze